# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SATURDAY • APRIL 26, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION

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## RUSSIAN GENERAL KILLED IN CAR BOMB AS U.S. ENVOY MEETS PUTIN

**A Russian general was killed by a car bomb on Friday in the second such attack in four months; Russia pointed fingers at Ukraine for the hit**

### SIGNS OF DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN KYIV, MOSCOW

Friday's bombing came just as US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow to discuss a US-brokered peace plan for the protracted Ukraine conflict. The meeting is their fourth encounter since February. Witkoff and Putin discussed the possibility of renewing direct negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv

### LOCAL RESIDENTS RECOUNT HORROR

- Footage from the Russian Investigative Committee showed the charred remains of a white car with its front section torn away
- Local residents in Balashikha, just outside Moscow, said they heard a loud blast at around 10:45 am (0745 GMT). "The explosion was very strong, it gave me heart pain," Lyudmila, who lives nearby, said | P14

**Dec 17**

**WAS WHEN A SIMILAR BOMB KILLED LT GENERAL IGOR KIRILLOV**

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Shah holds high-level meet to discuss ways to stop water flow into Pak, asks CMs to trace and send back Pakistanis in their states

# 'Will not let a drop of water flow into Pak'

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday held a high-level meeting with Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil to chalk out the strategy to stop the flow of water from Indian rivers into Pakistani territory.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Paatil said that the Centre has formulated a comprehensive plan to prevent the flow of water from Indian rivers into Pakistan.

"A roadmap was prepared in the meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Three options were discussed in the meeting. The government is working on short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures so that not even a drop of water goes to Pakistan. Soon, desilting of rivers will be done to stop the water and divert it," Paatil said.

It was also decided to inform the World Bank, the mediator of the Indus Water Treaty, of the suspension of the pact. Officials said the government also decided to raise the storage and operational capacity of dams on the rivers covered under the treaty, which governs water sharing of six rivers in the Indus basin between the two countries.

On Thursday, India had formally communicated to Pakistan about its intent to suspend the Indus Water Treaty.

Earlier in the day, Shah called up the chief ministers of all states and asked them to identify all Pakistani nationals in their respective jurisdictions and take immediate steps to ensure their prompt return to their country, sources said.

Later, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan held a video conference with the chief secretaries of all states and directed them to ensure that all Pakistani nationals whose visas were revoked must leave India by the fixed deadline.

The Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had on Wednesday decided to cancel all visas granted to Pakistani nationals in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were shot dead.

### T'GANA CM SEEKS REVENGE

Pledging complete support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi following the Pahalgam terror attack, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy urged him to "launch an attack on Pakistan" and integrate Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) into the Indian Union. "It is the time for a strong reply," he said

### FLIGHTS CANCELLED

IndiGo has cancelled flights to Almaty and Tashkent due to the closure of Pakistan's airspace. About 50 international routes operated by IndiGo may be subject to schedule adjustments, the airline said

The house of Adil Thokar, linked to the attack, being demolished in Bijbhera, in Anantnag | PTI

## HOUSES OF 2 LASHKAR MILITANTS LINKED TO TERROR PLOT RAZED

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

SENDING a loud and clear message that acts of terror will not be tolerated, the houses of two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants, whose names figured during investigation into the Pahalgam terror attack, were demolished by security forces in Tral and Bijbehara area of south Kashmir. This is the first such instance in J&K in over three decades long militancy.

The two militants were identified as Asif Sheikh from Monaghama area of Tral in Pulwama and Adil Hussain Thokar from Bijbehara area of Anantnag. Sources said the houses were blown up by security forces after planting IEDs. Their family members were evicted from the houses before they were demolished.

Sources said both Asif and Adil's name had cropped up during investigation in Tuesday's terror attack at Baisaran, Pahalgam in which 25 tourists and a local resident were killed.

While Adil was one of the three attackers involved in the attack, Sheikh is suspected to be involved in the conspiracy. Police released sketches of three attackers, including Adil, and announced a bounty of ₹20 lakh each.

"It is a loud and clear message to militants and their sympathisers that such attacks will not be tolerated. This will act as a deterrent to prevent such attacks in future," a security official said. He said there are clear cut orders to crush all those involved in the terror attack.

## Satellite-based toll collection may take few more yrs: NHAI

AKNISREE KARTHIK @ Bengaluru

OFFICIALS from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have said that the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)-based electronic toll collection system will not be implemented anytime soon. The officials, who were part of a pilot study in this regard, said that absence of On-Board Units (OBU) in many vehicles and privacy concerns regarding their exact location being shared are some of the reasons for this decision. It may take a few years for the launch of the satellite-based toll collection system.

An NHAI official said they selected Bengaluru-Mysuru access-controlled highway and Panipat-Hisar highway in Haryana last year for the pilot study along with the FASTag facility. "Compared to the existing toll collection facility, GNSS-based system will only collect the fee based on the distance travelled. OBUs will send signals when the vehicles enter and exit the geo-fence of the highway. Based on the distance travelled, the toll will be deducted/collected. A stretch of Bengaluru-Mysuru highway was selected and geo-fenced for the study. A report was submitted to NHAI officials after conducting the study last year," the official said. He said the project could not be implemented anytime soon because only a few vehicles have OBUs. All vehicles should have OBUs. Privacy concerns regarding vehicle's exact location being shared should be addressed. "So FASTag-based toll collection will continue," he said.

He said NHAI will soon introduce Automatic Number Plate Recognition-based barrierless tolling system in select toll booths. P2

## SC raps Rahul for remarks on Savarkar

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a relief to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order of the Allahabad High Court refusing to quash summons against him in a defamation case for his remarks against V D Savarkar. The court, however, censured Gandhi for his "irresponsible" remarks against Savarkar.

"Issue notice. Stay on impugned order (of the Allahabad High Court)," the two-judge bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Manmohan said while cautioning Gandhi to not repeat such "irresponsible" statements. "Let us not mock our freedom fighters," the bench said.

During his Bharat Jodo Yatra at a rally in Maharashtra's Akola district, on November 17, 2022, Gandhi had allegedly said that "V D Savarkar was a British servant who received a pension." Aggrieved by this comment, advocate Nripendra Pandey had filed a complaint against Gandhi in Lucknow.

## 23% of land ownership documents still in the names of dead in K'taka

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

The State Government, which has initiated a campaign to link Aadhar with Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC), has found that over 23% of documents related to land ownership are in the names of the dead.

The government will launch the inheritance record campaign by May-end. As per the documents available with *The New Indian Express*, there are 4.20 crore land owners whose Aadhar numbers have to be linked with RTCs.

The revenue department has completed linking 2.25 crore land owners' Aadhar numbers with their RTCs. Of them, 52.40 lakh owners have been declared dead as per a report.

Tumakuru district has the highest number of such cases with 5.61 lakh owners declared dead, followed by Belagavi with 4.7 lakh owners, Mandya 3.7 lakh and Kodagu and Kolar 2.8 lakh each.

The number of dead land owners is expected to increase if 4.2 crore owners' Aadhar numbers are linked with RTCs. After the death of a land owner, his land should be transferred to his legal heirs. The government has initiated village adalats, where a designated officer from the revenue department will dispose of cases that are not in the court of law.

With Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops still in the names of dead persons (mostly parents), the legal heirs are unable to avail themselves of many benefits, including compensation in case of natural calamities or loans from banks.

**The inheritance record campaign has been launched in Haveri and Gadag districts on a pilot basis**

Rajendra Kataria, principal secretary, revenue department

EXPRESS READ

### Cauvery Aarthi will be new Dasara attraction

Mysuru: The Cauvery Aarthi Committee will prepare the blueprint for the ritual within a week, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Friday. The event is due to be held during the Dasara festivities | P4

### Shivamogga girl gets 600/600 in PU II exam after revaluation

SHIVAMOGGA: Deeksha R, a student of Vagdevi PU College at Melinakuruvalli in Thirthahalli taluk, has secured 600/600 marks in PU II science stream after revaluation. She has retained her state topper position. Earlier, she was awarded 69/70 marks for chemistry theory. Now, her revised score of 70/70 has helped her bag 100/100 in chemistry paper.

24 OCTOBER 1940-25 APRIL 2025

## *Visionary behind India's space achievements*

MYLSWAMY ANNADURAI

KRISHNASWAMY Kasturirangan, former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is no more. Starting as an X-ray astronomer while growing up in positions, his scholastic services and accomplishments in the fields of science, technology, and education have left an indelible mark.

It was during his tenure (1994-2003) that the Indian space programme smoothly graduated from the experimental phase to the operational phase in the areas of earth observation satellites, communication satellites, and launch services. His visionary approach made ISRO boldly venture into commercial space, also leasing 10 transponders of INSAT-2E satellite to INTELSAT for $10 million as early as in 1999. It is through this service that Indians were able to watch cable TV in regional languages and Indian TV programmes reached 47 countries.

Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan

It was Kasturirangan's historic lecture on National Technology Day in 1998 ideating a technical possibility of India placing a satellite around the Moon (Chandrayaan-1) using the PSLV launcher that germinated into a full-fledged project report in 2003. P7

*(The author, former director, ISRO Satellite Centre, worked with Dr Kasturirangan from 1982 to 2003)*

### National space agency

It was during his tenure that ISRO's launch vehicles PSLV and GSLV were made operational, making ISRO a complete national space agency on the lines of advanced space-faring countries


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